Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A core for manufacturing pneumatic tires, ~~comprising~~ comprising:

a plurality of segments that are aligned in contact with each other to form a toroidal ~~assembly,~~ assembly; and

a pair of retainer rings engageable with said assembly axially from both sides so as to retain said plurality of segments in an assembled state, said core defining an inner surface of a tire from its formation up to completion of vulcanization of the tire, ~~wherein:~~

wherein said segments are each divided into a center portion that corresponds to a center portion of the tire in its width direction, and side portions that correspond to both side portions of the tire, respectively, said center portion and said side portions of each segment being detachably connectable to each ~~other.~~ other,

wherein each of the segments further comprises a base portion integrally arranged on an inner peripheral side of the center portion, and

wherein the side portions and the base portion of each segment are provided with positioning/assembling portions for the side portions, respectively, the positioning/assembling portions configured such that the side portions and center portion of each segment can be detached from each other while still within the tire after the tire has been vulcanized.

2. (Original) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 1, wherein each of said segments has parting surfaces between said center portion and said side portions, said parting surfaces of the segments being arranged in common planes when said segments are aligned as said toroidal assembly.

3. (Currently Amended) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 1, wherein said toroidal assembly of the segments comprises ~~small~~ first segments having a plane width that is substantially constant or gradually decreased radially outwards, and ~~large~~ second segments having a plane width that is gradually increased radially outwards, said ~~small~~ first segments and said ~~large~~ second segments being alternately arranged in a circumferential ~~direction.~~direction, the first segments being smaller than the second segments.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, wherein said positioning/assembling portions comprise at least one kind of male/female fitting portions.

6. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 1, wherein said segments are each provided with a connector means for connecting said side portions to said base portion.

7. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 1, wherein each of said segments has a maximum width at its portions corresponding to sidewall portions of the tire, and a minimum width at its portions corresponding to bead portions of the tire, said maximum width being larger than said minimum width by at least 40 mm.

8. (Currently Amended) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 2, wherein said toroidal assembly of the segments comprises ~~small~~ first segments having a plane width that is substantially constant or gradually decreased radially outwards, and ~~large~~ second segments having a plane width that is gradually increased radially outwards, said ~~small~~ first segments and said ~~large~~ second segments being alternately arranged in a circumferential ~~direction.~~direction, the first segments being smaller than the second segments.

9-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 2, wherein said segments are each provided with a connector means for connecting said side portions to said base portion.

12. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 3, wherein said segments are each provided with a connector means for connecting said side portions to said base portion.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 5, wherein said segments are each provided with a connector means for connecting said side portions to said base portion.

15. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 2, wherein each of said segments has a maximum width at its portions corresponding to sidewall portions of the tire, and a minimum width at its portions corresponding to bead portions of the tire, said maximum width being larger than said minimum width by at least 40 mm.

16. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 3, wherein each of said segments has a maximum width at its portions corresponding to sidewall portions of the tire, and a minimum width at its portions corresponding to bead portions of the tire, said maximum width being larger than said minimum width by at least 40 mm.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 5, wherein each of said segments has a maximum width at its portions corresponding to sidewall portions of the tire, and a minimum width at its portions corresponding to bead

portions of the tire, said maximum width being larger than said minimum width by at least 40 mm.

19. (Previously Presented) The core for manufacturing pneumatic tires according to claim 6, wherein each of said segments has a maximum width at its portions corresponding to sidewall portions of the tire, and a minimum width at its portions corresponding to bead portions of the tire, said maximum width being larger than said minimum width by at least 40 mm.